

Cap'n Warren's Wards

By Joseph C. Lincoln

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CHAPTER XVII—Continued.

"Humph! She does, hey? I want to know! Look here, Jim! Have you and she?"

He got no further, for Pearson broke away and, with a hurried "Good night," strode up the platform to meet the city-bound train. Captain Elisha entered the house by the back door, a remnant of South Denboro habit, and saw his niece, a shadowy figure, seated by the window. He crossed to her side.

"Well, Caroline," he said cheerfully, "I'm home again. Dearest, I just met Jim Pearson. He tells me he's decided not to go on this cape cruise of ours. He said you agreed with him 'twas best he shouldn't go. Do you mind tellin' me why? Have you and he had a fallin' out?"

Still she was silent. He sighed. "Well," he observed, "I see you have, and I don't blame you for not wantin' to talk about it. I'm awful sorry. I'd begun to hope that— However, we'll change the subject."

"Uncle," she said, "you know I always want to talk to you. Mr. Pearson and I have not quarreled, but I think—I think it best that I should not see him again. It would only make it harder for him, and it's of no use."

Captain Elisha sighed again. "I guess I understand, Caroline. I presume likely I do. He—he asked some-



"And yet you sent him away. Why?"

thin' of you, and you couldn't say yes to him. That was it, I suppose. Needn't tell me unless you really want to, you understand," he added hastily.

"But I do. I ought to tell you. Uncle Elisha, Mr. Pearson asked me to be his wife."

"The captain gave no evidence of surprise."

"Yes," he replied gravely; "I judged that was it. And you told him you couldn't. I suppose, well, dearie, that's a question nobody ought to answer but the one. You didn't care for him enough, I suppose. Caroline, you don't care for anybody else, do you? You don't still care for that other feller, that?"

"Uncle," she sprang up, hurt and indignant, "how can you?" she cried. "How could you ask that? What must you think of me?"

"Please, Caroline," he protested; "please don't. I beg your pardon. I was a fool. I knew better. Don't go. Tell me the real reason. Now tell me. Was it that you couldn't care for Jim enough?"

"I—I like Mr. Pearson very much. I respect and admire him."

"But you don't love him. I see. Well," sadly, "there's another one of my dreams gone to smash. However, you did just right, dearie. Feelin' that way, you couldn't marry him, of course."

"That was not the reason," she said in a low tone.

"Hey!" He bent toward her. "What?" he cried. "That wasn't the reason, you say? You do care for him?"

She was silent.

"Do you?" he repeated gently. "And yet you sent him away. Why?"

She faltered, tried to speak and then turned away. He put his arm about her and stroked her hair.

"Don't you cry, dearie," he begged. "I won't bother you any more. You can tell me some other time—if you want to. Or you needn't tell me at all. It's all right; only don't cry."

"I mustn't be so silly," she said. "I had made up my mind to tell you everything and I shall. My not caring for Mr. Pearson was not my reason for refusing him. He would marry me, poor as I am. And perhaps I—perhaps I should say yes if things were different. I know I should say yes and be very, very happy. But I can't and I won't! I won't! I suppose you think I have been perfectly satisfied to let you take care of me and of my brother and give us a home and all that we needed and more, but I have not been contented with that, nor has Steve. He and I have made our plans, and we shall carry them out. He will leave college in two years and go to work in earnest. Before that time I shall be ready to teach. I have been studying with just that idea in view. I haven't told you before, uncle, but one of the domestic science teachers at the university is a girl I used to know slightly. She is going to be married next year, and if all goes well I may be

appointed to her position when she leaves. Steve and I have planned it all. His salary at first will be small, and so will mine, but together we can earn enough to live somehow, and later on when he earns more perhaps we may be able to repay a little of all that you have given us. We shall try. I shall insist upon it."

"Caroline Warren, is that the reason you sent Jim away? Did you tell him that? Did you tell him you wouldn't marry him on account of me?"

"No, of course I did not!" indignantly. "I told him—I said I must not think of marriage; it was impossible. And it is. You know it is, Uncle Elisha."

"I don't know any such thing. If you want to make me happy, Caroline, you couldn't find a better way than to be Jim Pearson's wife. And you would be happy, too; you said so."

"But I am not thinking of happiness. It is my duty—to you and to my own self respect. And not only that, but to Steve. Some one must provide a home for him."

"But you won't have to leave him. Steve's future's all fixed. I've provided for Steve."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say." The captain was very much excited and for once completely off his guard. "I've had plans for Steve all along. He's done his rate in that broker's office, learnin' the trade. When he's out of college I'm goin' to turn over your dad's seat on the stock exchange to him. Not give it to him, you know—not right off—but let him try, and then, if he makes a good fist at it, he'll have it permanent. I ain't told him, and I don't want you to, but it's what I've planned for him, and—"

"Wait! Wait, uncle, please! The Stock Exchange seat? Father's seat? I don't see—I don't understand."

"Yes, yes," eagerly; "your pa's seat. I've meant it for Steve. There's been chances enough to sell it, but I wouldn't do that. 'Twas for him, Caroline, and he's goin' to have it."

"But I don't see how—why, I thought—"

By the light from the doorway he saw that she was gazing at him with a strange expression. She looked as if she was about to ask another question. He waited, but she did not ask it.

The Stock Exchange seat had been a part of her father's estate, a part of her own and Steve's inheritance. How could Captain Warren have retained such a costly part of the forfeited estate in his possession? For it was in his possession; he was going to give it to her brother when the latter left college. Who was this mysterious man her father had defrauded? She had never wished to know before; now she did. And the more she pondered the more plausible her suspicion became.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Stock Exchange Seat.

NOVEMBER weather on Cape Cod is what Captain Elisha described as "considerable chancey."

"The feller that can guess it two days ahead of time," he declared, "is wastin' his talents. He could make a livin' prophesyin' most anything, even the market price of cranberries."

When Caroline, Sylvester and the captain reached South Denboro after what seemed to the two unused to the leisurely winter schedule of the railroad, an interminable journey from Fall River, the girl thought she had never seen a more gloomy sky or a more forbidding scene.

But she kept her feelings hidden on her uncle's account. The captain was probably the happiest individual in the state of Massachusetts that morning.

He hailed the train's approach to Sandwich as the entrance to Ostabek county, the promised land, and from that station on excitedly pointed out familiar landmarks and bits of scenery and buildings with the gusto and enthusiasm of a schoolboy.

At Denboro he pointed out Pete Shattuck's livery stable, where the horse and buggy came from which had been the means of transporting Graves and himself to South Denboro.

"See!" he cried. "See that feller holdin' up the corner of the depot with his back, the one that's so broad in the beam he has to draw in his breath afore he can button his coat. That's Pete. You'd think he was too sleepy to care whether 'twas today or next week, wouldn't you? Well, if you was a summer boarder and wanted to hire a team you'd find Pete was awake and got up early. If a ten cent piece fell off the shelf in the middle of the night he'd hear it, though I've known him to sleep while the minister's barn burned down. The parson had been preachin' against horse tradin'. Maybe that sermon was responsible for some of the morphine influence."

Sylvester was enjoying himself hugely. Captain Elisha's exuberant comments were great fun for him. "This is what I came for," he confided to Caroline. "I don't care if it rains or snows, I could sit and listen to your uncle for a year and never tire. He's a wonder."

Dan, the captain's hired man, met them with the carriage at the station, and Miss Baker met them at the door of the Warren home. The exterior of

the big, old fashioned, rambling house was inviting and homelike in spite of the gloomy weather, and Caroline cheered up a bit when they turned in at the gate. Five minutes of Miss Abigail's society and all gloom disappeared. One could not be gloomy where Miss Abbie was. Her smile of welcome was so broad that, as her employer said, "it took in all outdoor and some of Punkhorn Neck," a place which, he hastened to add, "was forgot durin' creation and has sort of happened of itself since."

Abbie conducted Caroline to her room—old fashioned, like the rest of the house, but cozy, warm and cheery—and, after helping in the removal of her wraps, seized her by both hands and took a long look at her face.

"You'll excuse my bein' so familiar on short acquaintance, dearie," she said, "but I've heard so much about you that I feel's if I knew you like own folks. And you are own folks, ain't you? Course you are! Every one of Lisha's letters have had four pages of you to one of anything else; I begun to think New York was nothin' but you and a whole lot of ten story houses. I declare, you're almost prettier than he said. May I kiss you? I'd like to."

She did, and they were friends at once.

The house and buildings were spotless in paint and whitewash; the yard was raked clean of every dead leaf and twig; the whole establishment was so neat that Caroline remarked upon it.

"It looks as if it had been scoured," she said.

"Um-hm," observed her uncle, with a gratified nod; "that's Abbie. She hates dirt worse than she does laziness, and that ain't sayin' a little. I tell her she'd sandpaper the weather vane if she could climb up to it. As 'tis she stays below and superintends Dan while he does it."

Miss Baker had planned that her young guest should sit in state, with folded hands, in the parlor. She seemed to consider that the proper conduct for a former member of New York's best society. But Caroline refused to sit in the parlor and be "company."

She insisted upon helping. Miss Baker protested and declared there was nothing on earth to be done, but her guest insisted that if there was not she herself must sit. As Abbie would have as soon thought of attending to her duties without wearing her jet earrings as she would of sitting down before dinner, she gave in after awhile and permitted Caroline to help in arranging the table.

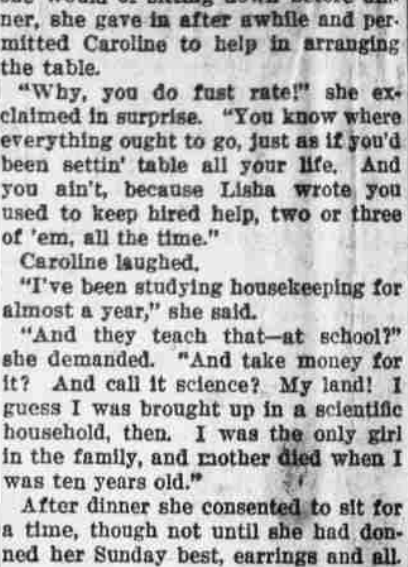
"Why, you do fast rate!" she exclaimed in surprise. "You know where everything ought to go, just as if you'd been settin' table all your life. And you ain't, because Lisha wrote you used to keep hired help, two or three of 'em, all the time."

Caroline laughed.

"I've been studying housekeeping for almost a year," she said.

"And they teach that—at school?" she demanded. "And take money for it? And call it science? My land! I guess I was brought up in a scientific household, then. I was the only girl in the family, and mother died when I was ten years old."

After dinner she consented to sit for a time, though not until she had donned her Sunday best, earrings and all.



"And you are our own folks, ain't you?"

Captain Elisha and Sylvester sat with them, and the big fireplace in the sitting room blazed and roared as it had not since its owner left for his long sojourn in the city.

Caroline's mind was busy with the suspicion which her uncle's words concerning his future plans for Steve had aroused. She had thought of little else since she heard them. The captain did not mention the subject again. Possibly on reflection he decided that he had already said too much. And she asked no more questions. She determined not to question him—yet. She must think first and then ask some one else—Sylvester.

Her opportunity came the following morning, the day before Thanksgiving. After breakfast Captain Elisha went downtown to call on some acquaintances.

After the captain had gone Sylvester sat down before the fire in the sitting room to read a Boston newspaper. As he sat there Caroline entered and closed the door behind her. Miss Abigail was in the kitchen busy with preparations for the morrow's plum pudding.

The girl took the chair next that occupied by the lawyer. He put down his paper and turned to her.

"Mr. Sylvester," she said, "I wish you would tell me something about the value of a seat on the stock exchange. What is the price of one?"

The lawyer looked at her in surprise. "The value of a seat on the stock exchange?" he repeated.

"Yes. What does it cost to buy one?"

He hesitated, wondering why she should be interested in that subject. Captain Elisha had not told him a word of the interview following Pearson's last visit.

"Well," he replied, smiling, "they're pretty expensive, I'm afraid, Caroline."



"You must excuse me."

I think the last sale was at a figure between \$80,000 and \$100,000."

"Indeed! Was father's seat worth as much as that?"

"Yes."

"But," with a sigh, "that, I suppose, went with the rest of the estate."

"Yes."

"Into the hands of the man who took it all?"

"Yes; the same hands," with a sly smile at his own private joke.

"Then how does it happen that my uncle has it in his possession?"

The lawyer smiled no more. He turned in his chair and gazed quickly and keenly at the young lady beside him. And her gaze was just as keen as his own.

"Why! Has he?"

"Yes. And I think you know he has, Mr. Sylvester. I know it because he told me so himself. Didn't you know it?"

"I—I cannot answer these questions," he declared. "They involve professional secrets and—"

"I don't see that this is a secret. My uncle has already told me. What I could not understand was how he obtained the seat from the man to whom it was given as a part of father's debt. Do you know how he obtained it?"

"Er—well—er—probably an arrangement was made. I cannot go into details because—well, for obvious reasons. You must excuse me, Caroline."

"One moment more," she said, "and one more question. Mr. Sylvester, who is this mysterious person—this stockholder whom father defrauded, this person who wishes his name kept a secret, but who does such queer things? Who is he?"

"Caroline, I tell you I cannot answer these questions. He does wish to remain unknown, as I told you and your brother when we first learned of him and his claim. If I were to tell you I should break my faith with him. You must excuse me, you really must."

"Isn't he my uncle, Elisha Warren?" Sylvester was halfway to the door, but she was in his path and looking him directly in the face. He hesitated.

"I thought so," she said. "You needn't answer, Mr. Sylvester. Your face is answer enough. He is. How could I have been so blind?"

The lawyer, nervous, chagrined and greatly troubled, remained standing by the door. He did not know whether to go or stay. He took his handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his forehead.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "Well, by George!"

She paid no attention to him, but went on, speaking apparently to herself.

"It explains everything," she said. "He was father's brother, and father in some way took and used his money. But father knew what sort of man he was, and so he asked him to be our guardian. Father thought he would be kind to us, I suppose. And he has been kind—he has. But why did he keep it a secret? Of course the money was his. All we had was his right. But to say nothing and to let us be here!"

Sylvester interrupted quickly. "Caroline, Caroline," he said, "don't make any mistake. Don't misjudge your uncle again. He is a good man, one of the best men I ever knew. Yes, and one of the wisest."

"Oh, Mr. Sylvester, please, now that I do know, now that you have told me so much, won't you tell me the rest, the reason and all of it? Please?"

The lawyer shook his head, regarding her with an expression of annoyance and reluctant admiration.

"Now that I've told you," he repeated. "I don't remember that I've told you anything."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Allied American."

Jean was asked in Sunday school what her nationality was. Remembering that her father and mother were born in Canada, she replied that she was an American, but of allied descent.

THE WAY OF A GIRL

By MISS JEANNE M. BLACK.

"Helen, I wonder who that distinguished-looking stranger can be who passes here so persistently every few hours in that gray roadster," said Mrs. Burk as she peered from between the curtains of the parlor window.

Helen blushed furiously and turned a conscious face to her mother. "Oh, yes, mamsey, I forgot to tell you about him. He is a guest at the tavern. I call him my Prince Charming," said Helen, laughing. "His name is Leroy Talmage. They say he made loads of money in Kalamazoo, Timbuctoo or some outlandish place, and came back to civilization to spend it. Then came the war. He has been to France and incidentally covered himself with glory and medals. He wears the military cross and the Legion of Honor upon his breast and looks like a man who really counts," finished the girl with sparkling eyes.

"But what brings such an amazing person to our secluded village? What is the attraction?" asked Mrs. Burk.

"Oh, rest and scenery, I suppose; he is on leave for convalescence. He calls these bald old mountains and rocky pastures 'exquisite,' 'a valley of dreams' and one of 'God's beauty spots.' I must say I don't admire his taste; give me the flesh-pots and bright lights. I care not how beautiful it be, if it be not beautiful to me," sang the happy girl as she pinned on her sun hat and gathering up a tin pail and lunch basket, she opened the door to the wind-blown morning.

"Bye-bye, mamsey, I'm off. I'll take the Marsh baby along for company and give poor Mrs. Marsh a chance to get her jelly made. Baby can roll in the clover while I pick berries."

"Well," thought Helen, with a giggle, as she tripped gaily away, "that's the time I put one over on mother. If she dreamed that her unsophisticated little daughter had actually flirted with the handsome stranger, I tremble to think what would happen to little me. But I should worry, everybody talks to soldiers these days."

Within half an hour, the Marsh baby, a pink and white morsel in rompers, was stumbling among the clover on unsteady legs, picking the "pitty-pitties" while Helen picked berries in the pasture on the other side of a rail fence. Suddenly the silence of the summer morning was broken by the low-toned, honk-honk of a motor car, and a familiar gray roadster of aristocratic lines came purring along the road and ground to a stop opposite the busy berry picker. A transformed Helen nodded a gay "good morning." Leroy Talmage climbed from behind the steering wheel, and with one leap was over the low stone wall, and with widening eyes stood looking down at baby Marsh.

"Da da," gurgled the infant, lifting entreating blue eyes and chubby arms.

"You rascal," and the tall military man caught the child up, held him aloft, then cuddled the little creature in his strong arms. The rose-leaf mouth was pressed to his bronzed cheek and the busy fingers played with the military cross.

"Why, baby Marsh, you are altogether too familiar," scolded Helen. "He calls every man he sees 'Daddy,'" explained the girl, with a bright blush. "His father is in France and he naturally misses him."

"Don't apologize for baby, Mrs.—er—Marsh; let me play with him. I am very fond of children."

When luncheon was over, the man sat quietly smoking and watching the girl with the sleeping child resting against her knee.

"Mrs. Marsh," he began, "I was amazed to find that you were a married woman." After a tense silence he added earnestly: "Would it interest you to know that I have never been in love—not the real thing?" Another silence. The girl stirred restlessly. The man went on huskily: "When I first saw you tripping along your quaint village streets, in your simple white gown and rose-wreathed hat, with your Red Cross bag on your arm—well, I knew I had reached a turning point in my life—that's all. I hope you will not think this confession impertinent. I am not in the habit of making love to other men's wives, and I hope you'll forgive me."

The girl sat with demure, downcast eyes, twining the child's silken curls about her finger. Suddenly she sprang to her feet with an exclamation. "Quick, it is raining; a big drop splashed on baby's nose; we will get soaked. Mr. Talmage, will you kindly motor us home?"

Ten minutes later they pulled up before Burk cottage. Helen turned a roguish face to her companion. "May I trouble you to drive up the street a block further? I must return baby Marsh to his mother. He was borrowed only for the day. And I would like to introduce myself. My name is Miss Helen Burk."

"Then you are not married?" exclaimed the man, and he turned a transformed face to the girl.

"Not that I know of," returned Helen, with a glance that meant much. "Won't you forgive me, Mr. Talmage?" she said, trembling with emotion.

"I'll think it over, sweetheart. It is a small thing to forgive, when the ending is so wonderful." She looked up at him sweetly. "There's a big life ahead of us, dear." His hand closed over hers in sudden tension. (Copyright, 1918, by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

THE JOY OF MOTHERHOOD

Came to this Woman after Taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to Restore Her Health

Ellensburg, Wash.—"After I was married I was not well for a long time and a good deal of the time was not able to go about."

"Our greatest desire was to have a child in our home and one day my husband came back from town with a bottle of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and wanted me to try it. It brought relief from my troubles."

"I improved in health so I could do my housework; we now have a little one, all of which I owe to Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."—Mrs. O. S. JOHNSON, R. No. 3, Ellensburg, Wash.

There are women everywhere who long for children in their homes yet are denied this happiness on account of some functional disorder which in most cases would readily yield to Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Such women should not give up hope until they have given this wonderful medicine a trial, and for special advice write Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Mass. The result of 40 years experience is at your service.

Will reduce Inflamed, Strained, Swollen Tendons, Ligaments, or Muscles. Stops the lameness and pain from a Splint, Side Bone or Bone Spavin. No blister, no hair gone and horse can be used. \$2.50 a bottle at druggists or delivered. Describe your case for special instructions and interesting horse Book 2 R Free.

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W. N. U., CINCINNATI, NO. 35-1918.

VERMIN ATTRACTED BY FOOD

If No Scraps Are Around There Will Be Little Trouble With Ants or Roaches.

The surest way to keep a house free from ants is to leave no food lying about on shelves or in open places, where they can reach it. Ants go where they find food, and if the food supplies of the household are kept in ant-proof metal containers or in ice boxes, and if all foods that may happen to be scattered by children or others is cleaned up promptly, the ant nuisance will be slight. Cake, bread, sugar, meat, and like substances, are especially attractive to the ants, and should be kept from them.

Roaches will not frequent rooms unless they find some valuable food material, and if such materials can be kept from living rooms and offices or scrupulously care exercised to see that no such material is placed in drawers where it can leave an attractive odor or fragments of food, the roach nuisance can be largely restricted to places where food necessarily must be kept.

A Letter's Difference.

"Bliggins doesn't seem to care for work." "No. He prefers a rustful life. Not restful. Rustful."

The Yanks are fighting in France as though they are anxious to get home to wife and mother.

The Wear and Tear on that boy of yours during the active years of childhood and youth necessitates a real building food.

Grape-Nuts

supplies the essentials for vigorous minds and bodies at any age.

"There's a Reason"

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